scheme to provide Central financial assistance every year for projects at places of Tourist interest identified in consultation with State Governments/UTs. During the first four years of 9th Plan, 1358 projects amounting to Rs.309.82 crores were sanctioned and an amount of Rs.116.99 crores released to the State Governments/UT Administrations in the country for development of tourism.

(c) During the first four years of the Ninth Plan, the Deptt. of Tourism, Govt. of India sanctioned an amount of Rs.12.77 crores as Central financial assistance for 55 projects for the State of Madhya Pradesh for various projects relating to development and promotion of tourism.

Organisation of River Darshan Festival in South

1201. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with Government to organise River Darshan Festival in the South on the line of Sindhu Darshan festivals in Ladakh;

(b) if so, what are the places chosen for the festival; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to consider the desirability of organizing such festivals, as they help promotion of culture and tourism and also national integration?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Tourism has received a proposal to organise the Kaveri Darshan festival in Karnataka. The festival is to be organised by the Government of Karnataka with the support of the Centre. Government of Karnataka is working out the modalities of the festival.

(c) Does not arise.